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Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons

Working paper submitted by Mexico

Chair's summary

Second Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons Nayarit, Mexico, 13-14 February 2014

Delegations representing 146 States, the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and civil society organizations participated in the second Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, held in Nayarit, Mexico, on 13 and 14 February 2014, to discuss the global and long-term consequences of any nuclear detonation, accidental or deliberate, from the perspective and concerns of twenty-first century society, including in such areas as public health, humanitarian assistance, the economy, development and environmental issues, climate change, food security and risk management, among others.

From the Chair's view, the broad and active participation of States and civil society reflects the global concern regarding the effects of nuclear weapons, as well as the increasing recognition that this is an issue of the utmost importance to all peoples in the world.

The Nayarit Conference expresses its gratitude for the participation of the victims and survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki attacks, as well as for the references made to the victims of nuclear tests.

The Nayarit Conference succeeded in presenting a facts-based approach to facilitating an informed discussion of these effects. Some key conclusions can be extracted from the presentations and discussion:

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- The effects of a nuclear weapon detonation are not constrained by national borders — it is therefore an issue of deep concern shared by all.
- Beyond the immediate death and destruction caused by a detonation, socioeconomic development will be hampered and the environment will be damaged. Suffering will be widespread, the poor and vulnerable being the most severely affected.
- The reconstruction of infrastructure and the regeneration of economic activities, trade, communications, health facilities and schools would take several decades, causing profound social and political harm.
- Radiation exposure could result in short- and long-term negative effects in every organ of the human body and would increase cancer risks and future hereditary pathologies.
- Today the risk of nuclear weapons use is growing globally as a consequence of proliferation, the vulnerability of nuclear command and control networks to cyberattacks and to human error, and potential access to nuclear weapons by non-State actors, in particular terrorist groups.
- As more countries deploy more nuclear weapons on higher levels of combat readiness, the risks of accidental, mistaken, unauthorized or intentional use of these weapons grow significantly.
- It is a fact that no State or international organization has the capacity to address or provide the short- and long-term humanitarian assistance and protection needed in case of a nuclear weapon explosion. Moreover, it would not be possible to establish such capacities, even if attempted.

As the Nayarit Conference is a follow-up to the first Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons (held in Oslo in March 2013), these conclusions build upon those reached in Oslo.

The wide range of damage and negative impact in the likelihood of a nuclear explosion, as well as the vast resources allocated to maintain and modernize nuclear arsenals, make the mere existence of these weapons absurd, make one question the arguments in their defence and, ultimately, are contrary to human dignity.

It is the Chair's perception that awareness of the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons is already changing the hearts and minds of those engaging in discussions concerning nuclear weapons worldwide.

Such actions as the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as a core element of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and the achievement of a comprehensive outcome in the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, together with the discussions on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, are mutually reinforcing processes.

When it comes to the total elimination of nuclear weapons, no efforts are small. In this regard, many delegations underscored the positive impulse provided by the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, held in 2013.

The Chair expresses his deep gratitude to civil society and its involvement in and inputs to the Nayarit Conference, and calls upon all Governments to forge new and renewed multisectoral partnerships with civil society to work towards mutually beneficial objectives.

The Chair warmly welcomes the offer of Austria to host the third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. The offer has been received with great support from participants as a follow-up to Oslo and Nayarit, to deepen the momentum, anchor the conclusions and take them forward. As expressed by many delegations, the Conference reiterates the invitation to nuclear-weapon States and States not parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to participate in the third Conference, to be held in Austria.

In doing so, we need to take into account that, in the past, weapons have been eliminated after they have been outlawed. We believe that this is the path to achieving a world without nuclear weapons.

In our view, this is consistent with our obligations under international law, including those derived from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as well as from common article 1 to the Geneva Conventions.

The broad-based and comprehensive discussions on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons should lead to the commitment of States and civil society to reach new international standards and norms, through a legally binding instrument.

It is the view of the Chair that the Nayarit Conference has shown that the time has come to initiate a diplomatic process conducive to this goal. Our belief is that this process should comprise a specific time frame, the definition of the most appropriate forums, and a clear and substantive framework, making the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons the essence of disarmament efforts.

It is time to take action. The seventieth anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki attacks is the appropriate milestone to achieve our goal. Nayarit is the point of no return.